

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This is responsive to the Office Action dated July 14, 2006.

Claims 61-64 were presented in the Amendment of April 18, 2006, but were not mentioned in the Office Action. The Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the finality of the Office Action and examine and allow claims 61-64.

Claims 1-64 are pending. Claims 1-8, 11, 17-19, 22, 23, 25-30 and 61-64 are readable on Figure 1, the elected embodiment. These claims were rejected as anticipated by Katsuhiko et al., JP 11-330031. Claim 1 recites as follows (emphasis added):

A substrate processing apparatus that removes an unwanted material on a surface of a peripheral portion of a substrate through etching by supplying etching liquid to the face of the peripheral portion, the apparatus comprising:

an etching liquid supplying mechanism that supplies the etching liquid to the peripheral portion of the substrate; and

an annular member that has an inner periphery on or inside an outer periphery of the substrate and thereby defines a processing width to be processed by the etching liquid on the surface of the peripheral portion of the substrate.

Related features are recited in claim 64.

Katsuhiko does not disclose an “annular member.” The elements that are actually disclosed in Katsuhiko do not have the features recited in Claims 1 and 64.

There is no Annular Member in the Reference

The Katsuhiko reference, JP 11-330031, fails to disclose the annular member recited in claims 1 and 64. Katsuhiko discloses a wafer processing device having several upper and lower posts, called “supporting members” 4 and 6 in the Examiner’s translation, which grip a peripheral area of the wafer.

The Office Action refers to “the annular member 4, 6” in the Katsuhiko reference. It suggests that the plural supporting members 4 and 6 of the Katsuhiko reference anticipate the “annular member” of claims 1 and 64.

The applicant is entitled to rely upon the normal meanings of English words, and has done so in preparing these claims. There is nothing “annular” in Katsuhiko. Webster’s 9th New

Collegiate Dictionary defines “annulus” as “ring” and “annular” as “of, relating to, or forming a ring.” The supporting posts 4, 6 in Katsuhiko are not rings and do not form a ring. This is a Section 102 rejection. Without a clear disclosure of a ring, the rejection cannot stand.

On page 6, the Examiner said, “Whether or not the annular member is discrete or continuous is immaterial.” This statement simply fails to consider that there is no annular member in the reference. The concept of a “discrete annular member” is self-contradictory in view of the common dictionary definition of “annular.”

Claim 61, filed April 18, 2006, recites that “the annular member is continuous.” If even necessary, claim 61 further distinguishes the invention from the art of record.

For at least these reasons, claims 1-8, 11, 17-19, 22, 23, 25-30 and 61-64 should be allowed.

Katsuhiko’s supporting members do not define a processing width

Further, the members 4 and 6 in Katsuhiko cannot “define a processing width to be processed by the etching liquid” as claimed, because they are not capable of guiding an etching liquid, and do not do so.

As explained for example at pages 7-9 and 46-48 of the specification, by providing the annular member it is possible to define a peripheral portion of a semiconductor substrate defined by the annular member and the substrate surface. The annular member guides an etching liquid to that peripheral portion to carry out an etching process and remove a metal thin film from that annular peripheral portion.

Referring to Figs. 1-2, in the elected embodiment the annular member 32 has a guide edge portion 46 which extends toward the wafer W and defines one side of the region on the wafer W that can be reached by the etching liquid film 50.

See also claim 62, which recites that “the processing portion is selectively etched by the etching liquid at an area defined by the annular member.”

As shown in Fig. 2 of Katsuhiko, the supporting members 4 are provided on the peripheral edge part of a base plate 60 with intervals between them. Therefore, the plurality of the supporting members 4 cannot be said to “define a processing width...” as claimed. They are

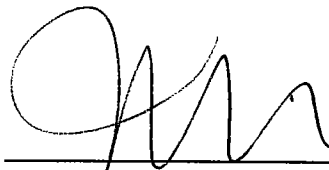
spaced apart from each other on the peripheral edge of the base plate 60 so that they cannot guide a liquid. They are merely supporting members and have no function relative to a processing liquid. No processing width or region is defined by the supporting members 4 and 6. The cleaning liquid in Katsuhiko flows all over the substrate.

For this reason as well, claims 1-8, 11, 17-19, 22, 23, 25-30 and 61-64 should be allowed.

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